

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-30

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R 261157Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4239

INFO SECDEF

USDEL MBFR VIENNA

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY BONN

USDEL SALT II GENEVA

USMISSION GENEVA

S E C R E T LONDON 12532

EXDIS

GENEVA FOR CSCE DEL

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MBFR, PFOR, UK

SUBJECT: MBFR: UK CONCERN ABOUT NUCLEAR OPTION

REF: STATE 208503, LONDON 7313 (NOTAL), STATE 211141

1. ON SEPTEMBER 23, MCLAREN OF FCO ASKED US IF WE HAD ANY INDICATION OF POSSIBLE U.S. RESPONSE TO UK REQUEST FOR MBFR CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON. WE DREW ON STATE REFTEL FOR RESPONSE. MCLAREN INDICATED IT WAS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT UK WOULD WISH DISCUSS MBFR IN WASHINGTON OCT. 10 AND 11 EVEN IF U.S. NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS OPTION III.

2. WE NOTE THAT BRITISH CONCERN ABOUT OPTION III HAS INCREASED IN PAST FEW WEEKS. SEVERAL FCO OFFICIALS HAVE RAISED NUCLEAR QUESTIONS ABOUT MBFR WITH US. THEY SEEM TO FEAR THAT U.S. IS GOING TO DROP A NUCLEAR HINT TO USSR WITHOUT ADEQUATE CONSULTATION WITH ALLIES.

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3. CONCERN HERE WAS FUELED BY WASHINGTON DATELINE PAUL

LEWIS STORY APPEARING IN SEPTEMBER 18 FINANCIAL TIMES WHICH SAID "LATER NEXT MONTH WHEN DR. KISSINGER GOES TO MOSCOW, HE IS CERTAIN TO DISCUSS THE MBFR OUTLOOK AND PERHAPS TRY TO INJECT SOME NEW LIFE INTO THE TALKS BY SUGGESTING THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS BE EXTENDED TO ENCOMPASS THE AMERICAN FORWARD-BASED NUCLEAR SYSTEMS IN EUROPE WHICH THE RUSSIANS ARE TRYING TO INCLUDE IN THE SECOND SALT ROUND."

4. CONSISTENT UK LINE IS THAT ALLIES SHOULD BE CONSULTED EVEN BEFORE THERE IS ANY DISCUSSION WITH USSR OF A NUCLEAR COMPONENT IN MBFR. ALL OFFICIALS WORKING ON MBFR HERE HAVE SAID REPEATEDLY THAT NUCLEAR OPTION SUBSTANCE, TIMING AND PRESENTATION DETAILS MUST BE SUBJECT OF THOROUGH CONSIDERATION WITHIN ALLIANCE BEFORE ANY ACTION TAKEN OUTSIDE ALLIANCE. THEY BELIEVE THAT A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF TIME MUST BE ALLOCATED TO ALLIANCE STUDY OF THIS QUESTION.

5. LEWIS ARTICLE AND OTHER REPORTS REACHING LONDON HAVE ALSO CAUSED SOME HMG OFFICIALS TO SPECULATE THAT MBFR MAY BECOME PART OF OVERALL TRADING ACTIVITY INVOLVING CSCE AND SALT. SPECIFICALLY THEY WONDER IF U.S. MIGHT OFFER TO PRESS FOR WESTERN CONCESSIONS IN CSCE AS INCENTIVE FOR RUSSIANS TO MOVE AHEAD IN MBFR AND SALT.

6. CONCERN WHICH HAS BEEN EXPRESSED TO US TO DATE IS CONFINED TO OFFICIAL LEVEL. MINISTERS HAVE NOT YET FOCUSED ON MBFR AND ARE CURRENTLY INVOLVED IN ELECTION CAMPAIGN. OUR FCO AND MOD SOURCES HAVE INDICATED, HOWEVER, THAT NUCLEAR ASPECTS OF MBFR WERE SUBJECT OF MINISTERS' QUESTIONS IN INITIAL MBFR BRIEFINGS EARLIER IN THE YEAR--SEE LONDON 7313 IN WHICH TICKELL OF FCO SAID THAT FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN FELT IN JUNE THAT NATO SHOULD BEGIN CONSIDERATION OF NUCLEAR OPTION. THESE OFFICIALS EXPECT OPTION III TO LOOM LARGE IN MINISTERS' MINDS AS SOON AS ELECTION IS OVER.

7. WE HAVE RESPONDED TO UK CONCERNS BY STRESSING THAT NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE IN USG ON NUCLEAR OPTION (PER SECRET

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STATE REFTEL 208503 PARA 2).
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